

# **CALIFORNIA INCIDENT COMMAND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. Will all fire department personnel need to be re-trained to meet the California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) requirements?**

**No.** CICCS is based on National Wildfire Coordinating Group 2000 (2006 or the CA Quals Guide) (NWCG) 310-1, the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, which has been in use for several years by the Federal Wildland Fire Agencies, as well as by many local fire agencies throughout the state. Typically ICS classes that are taught by California fire protection agencies and the ICS classes provided at training facilities around California, as well as around the country, meet CICCS standards.

California State Fire training (State Fire Marshal) added the components of S130 and S-190 in Fire Fighter 1. Equivalencies for S-231 (Engine Boss) were recognized as Fire Command 1A and 1B and S-205 as Fire Command 2C. So, the normal recognized career development standards for entry level firefighter, apparatus operator/engineer, and company officer with the addition of S-290 would train local government firefighters to the Engine Boss level. The addition of one more class, S330/336 Strike team leader and task book completion trains to the Strike Team Leader Engine level.

### **2. Does CICCS develop a certification system that excludes the involvement or approval of the local fire department chief?**

**No.** The local fire chief is required to approve the participation of his/her personnel at several phases of the training process. In fact, the local fire chief is the certifying official for all positions at the ICS 100 and ICS 200 levels. The local fire chief must also be involved in several steps of the certification system in the ICS 300 through the ICS 600 levels. For example, part of the application process for Peer Review includes a letter from the applicants fire chief indicating that the individual meets certification requirements.

The applicant will be awarded a SFMO Certificate upon passing the Peer Review Committee's evaluation. The decision whether a certified individual meets the physical fitness and currency requirements and may be designated "Qualified" to fill the position within the state mutual aid system rests with the home agency fire chief. It's not possible for a fire department member to achieve advancement through the CICCS without the fire chief approving the steps along the way.

### **3. Is a fire department "required" by the California State Fire Marshal or the Office of Emergency Services to participate in the CICCS?**

**No.** As in all certification systems CICCS is voluntary. These standards will apply to those hazard risks that historically involve statewide movement of resources from one agency to the

other. These typically include incidents such as wildfire, floods, urban search and rescue, civil disturbances, earthquakes and major hazardous material incidents. These standards would not necessarily apply to incidents that are routine first level responses within an agency or department.

**4. To be “Certified” by the SFMO, local government fire department personnel are required to submit an application package to the appropriate Peer Review Committee. What is the cost of a SFMO/CICCS Certificate?**

At the ICS 100 and ICS 200 levels, individuals are certified by their home fire department. There is no cost outside the local fire department at these levels.

After successful peer review, a SFMO/CICCS Certificate will be issued for ICS 300 and ICS 400 level training at no cost. After successful peer review by the Pace V Committee, SFMO/CICCS Certificates will be issued for ICS 500 and ICS 600 level training.

**5. How are the Peer Review Committees organized, and who sits on them?**

At the ICS 100 and ICS 200 levels, the local fire chief provides the review and approval process for certification of the members of his/her department. The California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid System, provides the framework for the organization of the Peer Review Committees at the ICS 300 and ICS 400 levels.

Applications for Certification at the ICS 300 level are submitted for review and approval by multi-agency committees created and maintained within each of the Mutual Aid Operational Areas throughout the state. The Peer Review Committee membership of each local Operational Area is composed, where applicable, of one representative from each of the following:

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
OES Fire and Rescue Branch  
Federal Wildland Fire Agency  
Federal Military Agency  
Tribal Fire Department  
Fire Protection District  
Contract County  
City Fire Department  
Metro Fire Department  
Labor Organization  
Independent Volunteer Fire Department/Fire District  
and a Qualified ICS Training Specialist.

Applications for Certification at the ICS 400 level will be submitted for review and approval by a multi-agency committee which has been created and maintained at the Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Regional Coordinator’s level. The Peer Review Committee membership

at the Regional level is composed of the same type of fire service representatives as outlined at the Operational Area level Peer Review.

Applications for Certification at the ICS 500 and ICS 600 levels are submitted for approval by the SFMO, and reviewed by the PACE V Committee. PACE V is a permanent standing committee of the State Board of Fire Services, with a chairperson elected by the committee members.

#### **6. What happens if a fire department decides not to participate in the California Incident Command Certification System?**

Essentially participation in the CICCIS is not required. However CICCIS has been recognized as the “industry standard” for Wildland Fire Training throughout the California Fire Service, just as NWCG 310-1 has been recognized as the national standard in the wildland fire community. Generally, safety organizations like Cal-OSHA hold public safety agencies accountable for conforming to existing standards.

All fire departments in California are encouraged to participate in the CICCIS.

In addition, the standards for the CICCIS are written into the “California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA).” Not meeting the CICCIS standards will impact the ability of a local government fire department to qualify for reimbursement for services provided to the Forest Agencies who are signatories to this agreement. In addition, the State Board of Fire Services, OES Fire and Rescue Services Advisory Committee/FIRESCOPE Board of Directors, California Fire Chief’s Association, and CSFA have endorsed the CICCIS.(reference page # in CFAA)

#### **7. Can you explain the Application process for Peer Review?**

ICS 100-ICS 200 An individual applying for position certification shall submit to their local agency fire chief the following documents:

1. Appropriate Course Completion Certificates
2. Appropriate Completed Position Task Book

ICS 300-ICS 600 An individual applying for 300-600 level ICS position certification shall submit to the appropriate Peer Review Committee the following documents:

1. Application (SFMO format)
2. Appropriate Course Completion Certificates
3. Appropriate Completed Position Task Book
4. Letter from his/her fire chief indicating that the individual meets certification requirements.

#### **8. What is the status of the “Incident Qualification System” software that was developed to permit fire departments to maintain a computer based training, experience and**

**education tracking system for each member? Is IQS only suited to track wildland fire training issues, or will it also record data for “all risk” applications? Will the IQS be compatible with the CICCIS? Is this software available and what is the cost?**

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group developed the Incident Qualifications System (IQS), jointly. It is based on NWCG 310-1. IQS Version 2.1.1 is available to be downloaded from the Internet or on CD at no cost to the user fire departments.

The latest update is version 5.0. The update from version 4.0 to 5.0 contains major changes to IQS reference tables based on the new January 2006, PMS 310-1 manual guidance.

Some of the features of the IQS include: Tracking of training, experience, fitness, and incident data; ability to add agency specific courses to the database, not just those in the NWCG 310-1 Guide; training needs analysis; task book tracking, availability of individuals for dispatch; provisions of differing security levels for those using the system, individual tracking needs and listing of all individuals qualified for a specific position, etc.

Being PC based IQS offers flexibility in hardware system specifications and an economical operating environment. This package was developed in Visual Basic using Microsoft Access, a standard, relatively low cost software program.

Because the CICCIS and IQS (Version 2) were both based on the January 2000 edition of NWCG 310-1, they are compatible.

## **9. Will California fire departments start issuing Incident Qualification Cards to all personnel?**

No. Participation in CICCIS is voluntary as is the issuance of an Incident Qualifications Card. The Incident qualifications card, sometimes called a red card, is issued by some departments and federal agencies who meet NWCG and agency standards. The value of the Incident Qualifications Card is that it is a portable written record, carried by the individual, which can be checked at an incident to verify the ICS qualifications of the holder. Several fire departments in California currently participate in a local incident qualifications system. The CICCIS does not specifically recommend the use of the federal Incident Qualifications Card; however the CICCIS Task Force has developed a recommended format that captures much of the same information. The FIREScope Board of Directors recommends the adoption of an Incident Qualifications Card by the California Fire Service. The IQS software (described in #8) does print “Incident Qualification Cards” to a laser printer either singly, all at once, or batched.

IQS also has the capability to enter a course roster and have the student records updated for that course, or to enter a number of courses for one person at a time. If desired, Training Officers are then able to provide fire program administrators with critical management information by documenting all qualifying training experience for each individual. Such information is vital in staffing incidents, documenting employee safety briefings, and qualifying training for individual employees.

## **10. Who determines the physical fitness level of individuals in relation to the CICC?**

Physical fitness is not part of the CICC. In order to be qualified following certification, an individual must be both current in their position and meet the department's physical fitness criteria. Generally a firefighter deemed fit for full firefighting duty is considered to meet the NWCG 310-1 arduous requirement. The applicant's Chief makes this decision.

Arduous duties involve work requiring physical performance calling for above-average endurance and conditioning which may include extraordinary strenuous activities under adverse environmental conditions over an extended period of time. Requirements include running, walking, climbing, jumping, twisting, bending and lifting more than 50 pounds. The physical fitness criteria is established by each agency's Illness, Injury Prevention Plan required by CAL OSHA for workplace safety.

The federal Agencies use the work capacity test, also known as the pack test to measure an individual's fitness level. To achieve arduous an individual must complete a three-mile walk within 45 minutes **while carrying a 45 pound pack or vest.**

## **11. What is a Task Book and how is one issued?**

Your fire chief or their designees are the only individuals authorized to initiate a task book. The Fire Qualification System is a performance based system. In this system the primary criteria for qualification is individual performance as observed by an evaluator qualified in the position, using approved standards and documented in an approved position task book (PTB).

In a performance based system qualification is based on demonstrated performance as measured on incidents, exercises or simulations, PTB's contain all the critical tasks to perform the job. Successful completion of all required task required of the position as determined by an evaluator(s) is the basis for certification. Trainee requirements include completion of all required training courses and prerequisite experience prior to obtaining a PTB (there are exceptions; for positions that include S-420, S-520, and S-620 as Required Training, position task books and the qualification process can be initiated prior to attendance and successful completion of these three courses.)

Agency certification and documentation is the responsibility of the employing agency certifying the individual is qualified to perform in a specific position.

The employing agency is responsible for selecting trainees, ensuring correct use of the PTB (appendix A NWCG 310-1), ensuring that the Trainee is fully prepared to perform the tasks of the position prior to undertaking a position performance assignment, and certifying trainees. Completion of required training and experience requirements do not guarantee an individual is qualified to perform in a position. The local agency chief should insure that the PTB's are administered correctly by insuring that issuing the PTB only after completion of all training and prerequisite experience is obtained and certifying completion of the Position Task Books once all training has been completed.

The PTB is the only record of task performance. A lost or destroyed PTB may require additional assignments. Always keep an updated copy.

**12. What if I don't get my task book completed within three years from issuance?**

If the PTB is not completed in three years from the date of the PTB initiation (or first task being evaluated) the PTB is no longer valid. A new PTB may be initiated, but all current qualification Standards will the apply. A PTB is valid for three years from the day it is initiated. Upon documentation of the first task in the PTB, the three year limit is reset from that new date.

**13. I have an open Position Task Book now. What happens to the PTB when the transition from the 2000 310-1 to the 2006 occurs?**

If all required training has been completed and a PTB has been properly initiated PMS 310-1 April 2006 states "complete the PTB within the three-year time limit. If the PTB is not completed in three years from the date of the PTB initiation (or first task evaluated), the PTB will no longer be valid. A new PTB may be initiated, but all current qualifications standards will then apply".

**14. How do you know if the course instructor meets meet the CICC standards? If they meet the NWCG standards then do they automatically meet the CICC standards or are there different standards for course delivery?**

If the course is an NWCG course the instructor must meet NWCG standards if it a State Fire Training course it must meet SFT standards. As long as the instructor meets the instructor criteria for the curriculum system they will meet CICC standards.

**15. What is the maximum amount of time allowed between taking the class and initiating the task book?**

5 years, however, it is up to the certifying official to determine whether there have been substantial changes in the required curriculum or other requirements that would warrant retaking courses. If the certifying official determines there are no substantial changes to the required training courses a new PTB will be issued. If there have been significant changes it is recommended to send the trainee back to the necessary training.

**16. Can I have more than one open Position Task Book?**

Yes. However, they must not be for positions that are a prerequisite for another. For example, you can not have a Strike Team PTB open and a Division Supervisor PTB open because being a qualified Strike Team Leader is a requirement of a DIVS trainee. A person could have a PTB open for DIVS and Resource Unit Leader or a Supply Unit Leader Trainee could have an additional PTB open for RESL because one is not a prerequisite for the other. It is recommended that agencies monitor the number of PTB's an individual have open at one time as not completing training can be costly and inefficient.

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